



U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
Office of the Director
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FACT SHEET

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OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice on a wide variety of matters involving the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). The OGC staff coordinates the development of agency regulations, reviews and comments on proposed legislation, and responds to all Freedom of Information and Privacy Act requests. In addition, OGC is the designated point of contact regarding Standards of Conduct and other ethics guidance for all EOIR employees. The Employee/Labor Relations Unit of OGC advises agency managers on personnel issues, defends Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) actions filed against the agency, monitors investigations conducted by the Office of Professional Responsibility in the Department of Justice (DOJ), and defends against unfair labor practices charges. OGC also administers EOIR's Legal Orientation and Pro Bono Program (formerly the *Pro Bono* Program), the EEO Program, the Attorney Discipline Program, the Fraud Program, and supervises the Certification Unit and the Recognition and Accreditation Unit. OGC also serves as the principal point of contact for U.S. Attorney offices, other DOJ offices, and government agencies on all legal matters.

Biographical Information

MaryBeth Keller, General Counsel

MaryBeth Keller was appointed General Counsel in July 2004. In addition to serving as General Counsel, Ms. Keller also served as Acting Chief Administrative Hearing Officer from October 2004 to April 2006. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1984 from The Catholic University of America, and a juris doctorate in 1987 from the University of Virginia School of Law. Prior to joining OGC, Ms. Keller served at the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), as a senior panel attorney from 1995 to 2004 and as an attorney advisor from 1988 to 1995. From 1987 to 1988, she worked as a law clerk in the 5th Judicial District of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa. Ms. Keller is a member of the Iowa Bar.

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Kevin J. Chapman, Deputy General Counsel

Kevin J. Chapman joined OGC in October 2003. He received a bachelor of science degree in 1979 from Arkansas Tech University, and a juris doctorate in 1986 from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Mr. Chapman served as Associate General Counsel for the U.S. Marshals Service, from September 2000 to October 2003. Prior to this, he served as Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army, Fort McPherson, Georgia, from June 1999 to September 2000; Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Army, Fort Stewart, Georgia, from June 1997 to June 1999; and litigation attorney, U. S. Army litigation division, Arlington, Virginia, from June 1994 to June 1997. Mr. Chapman is a member of the North Carolina Bar.

Jennifer J. Barnes, Associate General Counsel

Jennifer Barnes joined OGC in April 1995. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1976 from Miami University, a master of social work degree in 1979 from Ohio State University, and a juris doctorate in 1988 from the University of San Diego School of Law. Ms. Barnes served as Appellate Counsel for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) from July 1994 until April 1995. From 1990 until July 1994, she worked in the Office of the General Counsel for INS as an assistant general counsel and then as an associate general counsel. Ms. Barnes joined DOJ through the Attorney General's Honor Program in 1988 where she served as an INS trial attorney in San Francisco. Ms. Barnes is a member of the California and District of Columbia Bars.

Heidi Brissette, Associate General Counsel

Heidi Brissette joined OGC in January 2007. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1992 from the University of Melbourne in Australia and a juris doctorate in 1997 from the University of Denver. Prior to joining OGC, from 2004 to 2007, Ms. Brissette worked as an Associate Legal Advisor, Office of the Principal Legal Advisor, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security (DHS). From 2003 to 2004, Ms. Brissette worked as an asylum officer with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, DHS. From 1999 to 2002, she served as a Deputy State's Attorney in Vermont prosecuting domestic violence offenders. Ms. Brissette is a member of the Vermont and Colorado State Bars.

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Lisa Ann Compagno, Associate General Counsel

Lisa Ann Compagno joined OGC in March 2006. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1999 from Florida Atlantic University, and a juris doctorate in 2002 from New York Law School. Ms. Compagno served at the BIA as an attorney advisor from September 2002 to March 2006. During this time, from October 2004 to September 2005, she was detailed to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Tucson, Arizona, where she worked as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. Ms. Compagno is a member of the New York State Bar.

Cecelia M. Espenoza, Senior Associate General Counsel

Cecelia Espenoza joined OGC in May 2003. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1979 and a juris doctorate in 1982, both from the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Ms. Espenoza served as a Board Member at the BIA from August 2000 to May 2003. She served as an associate professor of law at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, Texas, from July 1997 to August 2000. From August 1990 to May 1997, Ms. Espenoza was an assistant professor of law at the University of Denver College of Law. Ms. Espenoza worked as a city prosecutor and a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in Salt Lake City from 1986 to 1990, and as a city prosecutor in Sandy City, Utah, from 1984 to 1986. She was director of the migrant unit and bilingual attorney for the Utah Legal Services, Inc., from 1982 to 1984. She is a member of the Utah, Colorado, and Texas State Bars.

JuanCarlos M. Hunt, Associate General Counsel

JuanCarlos M. Hunt joined OGC in February 2007. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1994 from Cornell University and a juris doctorate in 1997 from Case Western Reserve School of Law. From March 2004 to February 2007, Mr. Hunt served as an attorney advisor for the Office of Justice Programs, Office for Civil Rights, DOJ, in Washington, DC. From May 2001 to March 2004, he served as a trial attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Washington, DC. Mr. Hunt was in private practice from 1998 to 2001. He served as a law clerk to Chief Judge Thomas Vanaskie, U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania, from 1997 to 1998. Mr. Hunt is a member of the Ohio Bar.

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Steven C. Lang, Coordinator
Legal Orientation and Pro Bono Program

Steven C. Lang was appointed Coordinator, Legal Orientation and Pro Bono Program (formerly the *Pro Bono* Program) at EOIR in April 2000. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1990 from the University of Texas at Austin and a juris doctorate in 1993 from the University of Houston Law Center. Mr. Lang served as Attorney-Coordinator for ProBAR (the South Texas *Pro Bono* Asylum Representation Project) in Harlingen, Texas, from June 1997 to February 2000. From May 1994 to June 1997, Mr. Lang was in private immigration practice in Houston, Texas. He is a member of the Texas Bar.

Barbara Joan Leen, Associate General Counsel

Barbara Joan Leen joined OGC in October 2006. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 2000 from George Washington University and a juris doctorate in 2005 from the University of Connecticut School of Law. Ms. Leen joined DOJ through the Attorney General's Honor Program in October 2005 and served in the Philadelphia and Atlanta Immigration Courts from October 2005 to October 2006. She is a member of the New York Bar.

C. Lockhart Nimick, Associate General Counsel

C. Lockhart Nimick joined OGC in March 2006. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1983 from Princeton University and a juris doctorate in 1989 from Washington University. Mr. Nimick served at the BIA in a management capacity from 1995 until 2006 and as an attorney advisor from 1990 until 1995. He served as a law clerk in the New York Immigration Court in September 1989. Mr. Nimick is a member of the New York State Bar.

Carolyn M. Piccotti, Associate General Counsel

Carolyn M. Piccotti joined OGC in November 1999. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1979 from Dickinson College and a juris doctorate in 1983 from the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Ms. Piccotti served as an attorney advisor at the BIA from May 1988 to November 1999. From September 1995 to January 1997, she was detailed to the United States Commission on Immigration Reform. Prior to joining DOJ, Ms. Piccotti worked as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, from 1986 to May 1988. From 1983 to 1986, she was in private practice. Ms. Piccotti is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar.

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Sharon J. Pomeranz, Associate General Counsel

Sharon J. Pomeranz joined OGC in March 2003. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1986 from San Diego State University and a juris doctorate in 1991 from Southwestern University. From September 1991 to March 2003, Ms. Pomeranz served as senior Assistant General Counsel, U.S. General Services Administration, Washington, DC. She is a member of the California Bar.

Sandy Reinfurt, Associate General Counsel

Sandy Reinfurt joined OGC in April 2007. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1989 from the University of Richmond, and a juris doctorate in 1992 from the American University. From August 2006 to April 2007, Ms. Reinfurt served as an attorney-advisor with the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command in Alexandria, Virginia. From October 2003 to August 2006, she served as a labor and employment attorney with the Department of the Army, XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. From February 2003 to October 2003, Ms. Reinfurt served as a labor and employment attorney for Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. From July 1993 to July 1998, she served on active duty in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. Ms. Reinfurt is a member of the District of Columbia Bar.

Marta Rothwarf, Associate General Counsel

Marta Rothwarf joined OGC in June 2003. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1979 from Douglass College, Rutgers; a diploma in 1984 from the Textile Conservation Centre, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London; and a juris doctorate in 1990 from Temple School of Law. From June 1997 to June 2003, Ms. Rothwarf served as an asylum officer for DHS. She also served as an asylum officer in Los Angeles, California, from November 1994 to June 1997. Ms. Rothwarf was in private practice from September 1990 to November 1994. She is a member of the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and District of Columbia Bars.

Sue B. Sheehan, Associate General Counsel

Sue B. Sheehan joined OGC in January 2007. She received a juris doctorate in 1989 and a master of laws degree in 1992, both from Georgetown University Law Center. She was in private practice from 1991 to 2002. Ms. Sheehan served as a law clerk for the Honorable Laurence J. Whalen, United States Tax Court, from 1989 to 1991. She is a member of the District of Columbia and Pennsylvania Bars.

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Charles F. Smith, Associate General Counsel

Charles Smith joined OGC in January 1999. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1989 from the University of Massachusetts and a juris doctorate in 1996 from the District of Columbia School of Law. From January 1998 to December 1998, Mr. Smith worked as a law clerk at the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel in Washington, DC. He served as a staff counsel for the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia from August 1997 to December 1997. Mr. Smith also worked as a law clerk at the District of Columbia Office of Bar Counsel from January 1995 to August 1997. Mr. Smith is a member of the Massachusetts, Maryland, and District of Columbia Bars.

Gustavo D. Villageliu, Senior Associate General Counsel

Gustavo D. Villageliu joined OGC in May 2003. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1973 and a juris doctorate in 1977, both from the University of Iowa. From July 1995 until May 2003, Mr. Villageliu served as a Board Member at the BIA. He served as an immigration judge in Miami from 1989 until 1995. Prior to that, he served as an attorney advisor at the BIA. Mr. Villageliu is a member of the Florida and District of Columbia Bars.

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